



Mayo Society of New York

P.O. Box 780214

Maspeth, NY 11378-0214

<http://mayosocietyofny.com>

E-mail: mayosocietyofny@gmail.com

Founded 1879; incorporated 1891 as Mayo Men's Benefit, Patriot and Social Association of the City of New York; later as Mayo Men's P & B Association and in 1985, gender neutral as the Mayo Society, Inc. of the City of New York.

Vol.162

Newsletter

April 2021

Regular Meeting

Where:

Cancelled Due to COVID-19

St. Sebastian Parish Center

39-60 57th Street

Woodside, NY 11377

Time:

7:30 P.M. Sharp

Our President's Note

Dear Members and Friends,

I hope you had a nice St Patrick's Day.

With winter behind us, we are looking forward with optimism to brighter and better days as we celebrate Easter. It is great having a longer day and look forward to returning to some form of normalcy,

Unfortunately, COVID 19 is still with us, therefore, we cannot become complacent. I hope most members (especially our seniors) have got their shots by now, which gives some peace of mind.

Gradually, we will be working on scheduling our meetings and social events, hopefully, later this year. We must wait for the CDC guidelines to give us firm directions as to how many people can actually attend meetings, social gatherings, etc., and of course social distancing. Until then we cannot plan any event.

We are hoping to have our trip to Our Lady of Knock East Durham and Communion Breakfast as usual this year if all goes well. We will keep you informed.

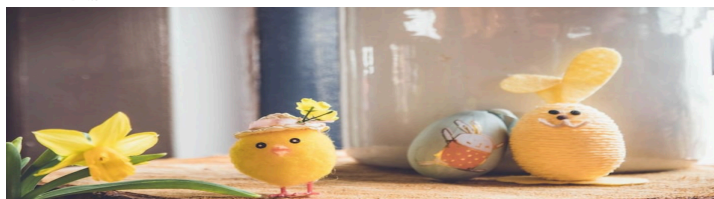
Please continue to pray for our sick, dearly departed and our essential worker's.

Wishing you all a very happy and Holy Easter.

God Bless, Stay safe.

Lé Grá Mór.

Noreen Lydon O'Donoghue
President.



Irish Easter Traditions and Beliefs.

GOOD FRIDAY

- Cleaning the house completely ("spring cleaning"),
- Planting a small quantity of seed (crops not flowers) to create a blessing on the family.
- Avoiding any possible bloodshed by doing no work with tools.
- Go To Confession and remain quiet for part of the day.
- Holy well water is said to have curative powers on this day.
- Mark one egg laid on Good Friday to be eaten on Easter Sunday.
- If a child is born in Good Friday and then baptized on Easter, he or she will have the gift of healing (a boy born on Good Friday will go into the priesthood).
- Anyone who dies on Good Friday will go directly to heaven.
- Visits should be paid to holy wells and graveyards.
- No fishing is done from boats – only sea food gathered on shore (seaweed; shellfish) will be part of the Easter meal.
- One should get a haircut, to prevent headaches!

EASTER SATURDAY

- Attend church ceremony to have holy water blessed, then drink 3 sips of it for health and sprinkle on family members and sometimes even cattle on the farm for good luck.
- Attend Easter Vigil on Saturday night.

EASTER SUNDAY

- Rise with the sun and dance in celebration.
- Butchers conduct a mock funeral in honor of a dead herring. This symbolizes the end of Lenten abstinence. A "herring procession" then marches to the local church.
- Take down the "spoilin meith na hlnide," a small piece of meat pinned up on the wall during Lent and burn it to give a pleasant smell to the inside of the house.
- Boil and paint eggs have rolling contests and egg hunt for children.
- Conduct a "cludog," where children gather eggs and roast them on a farm contraption. Shells are saved and placed around the bottom of a May bush.
- Celebrate with a "cake dance," a contest where the best dancer wins a cake.
- Close out Easter celebration with a bonfire where all gather round the celebrate.

JOHN "THE YANK" KILGALLON: The Rebel of The Rising from Rockaway

John Aloysius Kilgallon was born on September 5, 1891. His father Luke came from Coogue, Co. Mayo. His mother Nora (née) Walsh came from Knock, Co. Mayo. The family lived in Far Rockaway. His father ran a blacksmith shop, which became a successful auto repair shop on Beach 19th Street.

In 1912, John took a customer's car from his father's garage without permission to drive his friends' home on a rainy night. The car struck a farm wagon in Springfield Gardens neighborhood in Queens at 2am. A young woman was crippled in the accident. She initiated a lawsuit. In the meantime, between the accident and the judgement, John had gone to Ireland.

His family attended a speech given by Pádraig Pearse at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on March 1914. Pearse was on a speaking tour to raise much needed funds for St. Enda's School in Dublin. It was a school for boys emphasizing Irish cultural identity, particularly history, mythology, poetry, and most especially the Irish language.

Pearse wrote to a friend in July 1914: "I have got another Irish-American for next term. His name is Kilgallon, his father owns real estate in Far Rockaway and he is quite a young man. He will rank as a university resident." Kilgallon is said to have been well-liked and to have thrived in this environment, which included honor and discipline of an increasingly military nature, as well as academics.

Kilgallon belonged to Na Fianna Éireann youth organization, and the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), an oath-bound organization dedicated to establishing an Irish Republic by force. He became a member of E Company, 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade of the Irish Volunteers. The company was called "Pearse's Own".

On Easter Monday, 24 April 1916, E Company arrived at the rebel headquarters at the GPO on O'Connell Street. After reading the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, Pearse ordered them to take up positions on the roof; where they fired and were fired upon by British troops and took artillery fire from the British gunboat Helga. Argentine-born Éamonn Bulfin raised the green "Irish Republic" flag on the roof of the GPO and remembered: "One of the pictures that stands out in my mind, is seeing Kilgallon running round on the roof trying to stop fires." Kilgallon also saved his life by pulling him from a window in the GPO, which was under heavy fire. Kilgallon is also remembered for a humorous event where he returned from the Henry St. Waxworks, wearing a costume looted from a wax figure of Queen Elizabeth I!

After the order to surrender was given on Saturday 29 April, Kilgallon was sent first to Stafford Jail in England, then to Frongoch internment Camp in Wales with many other rebel prisoners. He had written to his parents before the Rising that he saw trouble was coming. When they heard no news from him for a while, they feared he might have been killed in the fighting. He was able to smuggle out a letter from Frongoch for him which read:

"The authorities said they would release some of us if we would sign a form promising not to take arms against His Majesty's forces and give bonds to that effect. You know there are none of us here who could do that without betraying the cause we fought for, so I suppose we will have to stay. But it is worth it after all for if we signed these forms, they would say they were justified in shooting our leaders as we were only dupes who did not know what we were fighting for. But they will never get us to do that, if they keep us here until we rot."

Kilgallon was released before Christmas of 1916 and returned back to the US as part of a general amnesty. The following poem was published in The Brooklyn Eagle newspaper 28 December 1916:

"Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village blacksmith stands
The Smith a mighty man is he
With strong and sinewy hands
Yet worried Luke Kilgallon felt
And mourned since Easter Day
His son, a fine uprising Celt
Was far from Rockaway
For John had been at school with Pearse
That Dublin patriot grim
And when Pearse led his outbreak fierce
The Lion seized on him
Since then poor John, locked up in Wales
And even wails suppressed
Had shared the fare of British jails
Not quite a merry jest
'A Merry Christmas I am free'
Flashed 'neath the ocean foam
The smith a jolly man is he
His John is coming home".

On his return, Kilgallon joined the US Navy and served as a machinist during World War I. He lived a quiet life managing the family business on Beach 19th Street. He died on 30 January 1972 as a member of the Rockaway Irish community which maintains a strong presence there to this day.

Kevin Rooney

